

Some American Paintings in Europe

Mrs. Whitney's Collection For the Show in Venice

By Royal Cortissoz

From Pittsburgh comes the news that the nineteenth annual exhibition has been opened. We print below some information about the showing of American art that is presently to be made in Venice, beginning on May 8. Through the courtesy of Knoedler & Co. we have received a catalogue of the Marlier collection which is to be sold in Brussels on May 15. These incidents are significant. They synchronize with a lull in the art season here and forcibly remind us that that season will soon come to an end. A few exhibitions are still to be expected. The Spring Academy lasts for another week in Brooklyn. There will be further activities also in the salesrooms. But the climax will be marked when the Metropolitan Museum opens to the public next Saturday the great exhibition in commemoration of its fifteenth anniversary. This in a sense will extend the season for some months, inasmuch as the wonderful loans made for the occasion will remain on view throughout the summer. The hot period is far from discouraging artistic interest in New York. Though many of the dealers then go abroad to replenish their stocks it is also a fact that some of their best customers are these from distant parts of the United States who come here in the summer.

Thirty Americans in Venice

Recently we have had occasion to allude to one striking phase of the international movement in the art world, the invasion of the United States by foreign painters. This, as we have said, has reached remarkable proportions. We have had many of European visitors this winter, and it is probable that next season the number will be increased. Meanwhile, what of American art abroad? One important demonstration of its value has already been made through the exhibition at the Luxembourg, which was promoted through the courtesy of the French government, and which owed so much to the energy of Mr. William A. Coffin and his colleagues. It is not generally known that Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney also has been effectively interesting herself in the cause. Two or three years ago she developed the idea of organizing a large, comprehensive exhibition of American art in Paris. War conditions put difficulties in the way of this project, and ultimately it was relinquished. Mrs. Whitney was unwilling, however, to abandon the campaign in support of American art which she has, in fact, long generously carried on through the exhibitions in her Eighth Street galleries, and some months ago she decided to do what she could toward insuring American participation in the international show at Venice, an affair to be joyously resumed this summer.

In all Europe there never arises during the season an opportunity quite like this one. The present writer has vivid recollections of the inauguration of the great series of exhibitions, in 1895. Place for them had been made in the delightful environment of the Public Gardens, the ideal spot at which to pause in a gondola on the way to the Lido. The handsome galleries were electric with enthusiasm on the perfect afternoons. At night, forgetting for dinners at an ancient trattoria not far from the Piazza, with Villages, Martin Rico and other leading spirits in the new venture, one listened to the most sanguine prophecies as to its success. Other visits, in later years, brought confirmation of these forecasts. The artists of Europe came quickly to realize that at the international show in Venice they were certain to find altogether charming conditions. The surroundings alone were uniquely attractive. Even the weather counted. Before the mosquitoes come, terrible as an army with banners, Venice is about as close to an earthly or maritime paradise as one could get. The moment is auspicious for idle contact with pictures, and this summer travel doubtless will be revived there somewhat as in the old days. It is of this altogether favorable place and time that Mrs. Whitney has had the inspiration to take advantage.

The collection she has formed for the purpose has a rather unusual character. It has been subjected to no jury. It has no relation to officialdom. Of course, it could not have been put together without omissions, its scale being necessarily limited. Being, so to say, a personal venture, the organizer simply undertook to obtain works that would illustrate some of the salient types of a period roughly extending over twenty-five years. Even on that hypothesis the list as framed is obviously not by any means all-inclusive. Yet neither is it a narrow list. It begins, for example, with the late Thomas Eakins, three of his paintings being sent. There is also a canvas by the late A. I. Collins, a portrait painter untimely lost. A. P. Ryder is represented, and Abbott Thayer's landscape art is illustrated in one of his winter paintings of Monadnock. The more impressionistic tendency in American art has for its exemplars Twachtman, Weir, Robinson and Hassam. The decorative wing is maintained by the late Howard Chandler Christy and by Robert W. Chanler. Then come such workers in the open air as Ernest Lawson, E. W. Redfield and Paul Dougherty, and following them the more conspicuous types are George Bellows, Arthur B. Davies, George Luks and W. J. Glackens, leading up to the more "advanced" experimentalists like Maurice Sterne and Mr. McFee.

Looking over the catalogue one sees at a glance that this so-called "advanced" group and its kinsfolk, if we may so describe them, have on the whole a predominant share in the enterprise. The Venetian exhibition will not by any means convey an academic impression of American art. Neither, by the same token, will it be in other respects anything like as representative of our school as we would like it to be. Some of the omissions hinted at above inspire a regret which we cannot forbear from expressing. It seems a pity that there should be nothing from T. W. Dewing, nothing from Willard Metcalf, and so on with a company which could have been made large enough. If Eakins, why not La Farge? But such questions are, perhaps, beside the point. Winslow Homer, for example, would have been included, we believe, if a painting by him could have been procured. The important matter is that Mrs. Whitney has made a sincere effort to send abroad a group of pictures shedding some light on the present state of American painting. After it has been seen in Venice she will take it to Paris and then to London. Whatever discussion it may excite as regards the question of representative character it will not fail to be of service as a liberal gesture in the artistic internationalism which cannot be too zealously cultivated.

New Pictures in Pittsburgh

A dispatch from Pittsburgh states that the exhibition just opened at the Carnegie Institute contains 373 paintings from artists of America, England, France, Scotland, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Spain and Switzerland. Three prizes have been awarded. The gold medal, with \$1,500, has gone to Abbott Thayer for his picture of "Young Woman in Olive Plush." It is reproduced elsewhere in The Tribune to-day. An English artist, Algernon Talmage, has won the silver medal, which carries \$1,000, with a picture entitled "By the Cornish Seas." Walter Ufer, of Chicago, has been awarded the bronze medal and \$500 for "Suzanna and Her Sisters," an interior with Indian figures perched before a window that gives upon a sunlit scene.



THE TOWING PATH
(From the painting by the late Theodore Robinson in the Venice exhibition.)

Honorable mentions have been conferred upon "The Spanish Dancer," by George J. Coates; "Looking at Prints," by Frederick Bosley, and "The White Mill," by Robert Spencer. In the slender sheaf of photographs thus far received we note especially the portrait "Ann Rholene," by Malcolm Parcell, the phenomenally gifted young Pittsburgh painter of whose work we spoke in some detail not long ago. The treatment of the drapery recalls his "Louise," which introduced him to us at the Academy here in 1919. The portrait, as a whole, indicates that he has made progress. Paintings, of course, have most of the space in this exhibition, but there are other features, one of them a group of bronzes by Rodin. The show lasts until June 30.

The Commission of Fine Arts

The eighth report of the Commission of Fine Arts, covering the period from January 1, 1918, to July 1, 1919, has just been issued from the Government Printing Office at Washington. It makes a stout pamphlet of nearly 150 illustrated pages, too voluminous a document to be exhaustively traversed in this place, but the broad significance of the commission's work cannot be permitted to pass unnoticed. The advisory functions of this body, unobtrusively administered, without reward, by men distinguished in their professions, are of profound value to the country. They give support to public work that is good and place constructive obstacles in the way of public work that promises to be bad. The commission is a kind of Federal clearing house for ideas that emerge affecting the artistic integrity of the United States. Thus the present report opens with a useful summary of everything that relates to the future

of War and the Secretary of the Navy issued orders for consultation with the commission over the designing of all medals or decorations authorized. This policy has borne admirable fruit. A really beautiful work has been produced in the Victory Medal by James E. Fraser, who has also designed the Distinguished Service Cross for the navy. A design for a naval medal by Paul Manship has been accepted, and another design by him for the army Congressional medal was under consideration when the commission's report went to press. Designs for insignia have been accepted from Herbert Adams and A. A. Weinman, and the latter has also designed a Victory button, which is to be presented to every soldier who enlisted during the war. Edwin Howland Blashfield made the drawing for the certificate going from the War Department to all wounded men. For the American cemeteries in France Charles A. Platt designed the headstone which is to be erected at each grave. In these and in other ways the commission has sought to establish "right principles in American works of art commemorative of the war. Part of its work has been the preparation, at the request of Congress, of a report suggesting suitable monuments and other memorials, and the best methods of securing artistic excellence in such things. The best tribute that we can pay to the commission lies in the statement that it labors unceasingly for the affirmation of good taste. The names of the members throughout the period covered by this report are as follows: Charles Moore, chairman; Herbert Adams, vice-chairman, sculptor; Alden Weir (died December 8, 1919); William M. Kendall, architect; John Russell Pope, architect; Frederick Law Olmstead, vice-chairman, landscape architect, succeeded by James L. Greenleaf, landscape architect; Colonel C. S.

show in John Sloan, Boardman Robinson, Kerr Eby, Henry Raleigh and James N. Rosenberg. Mr. George Bellows rather disappointed the expectations roused by his earlier lithographs. His tennis prints seemed curious jumbles of values. Mr. Kerr Eby registered the new sensation of the occasion, his lithographs disclosing again the fine talent which he had revealed on the stone and with the needle in his own exhibition at the Keppel gallery. Prefixed to the catalogue of the



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Painter-Gravers there was a note embodying one suggestion which it is fitting to cite at any time. It proposed that this organization should some day have a house of its own, where a guild shop for the sale and distribution of American prints should be established under the supervision of the directorate of the society. A library would form part of the scheme, and a center would be provided at which print makers could come in contact with print makers and perhaps witness demonstrations of technical processes. The Painter-Gravers have already a long list of patron members. Their work is unmistakably winning sympathy and encouragement. That they should have a home of their own is a good idea, especially if they are willing to begin in a small way and make it plain that the whole purpose of the society is to adopt and maintain an inexorably high standard. The one decoration forbidden in the house should be the commonplace, mediocre artist.

The Marlier Collection

The late Eugene Marlier was a Belgian connoisseur who appreciated the school of his own country. The illustrated catalogue of his collection, which is to be sold at auction in the gallery of Le Roy Frères, at Brussels, on May 15, suggests that he was well advised in his loyalty. Some of his types are representative of an ancient tradition. Henri de Brackeleer patiently emulated the scrupulous realism of the Little Old Masters of the Low Countries. But there are some pictures here reproduced to bring home to us the fact that it was a Belgian, Alfred Stevens, who did some of the most brilliant work accomplished in the renovation of modern

cover is executed in silk which still preserves its pristine beauty of texture and color. It is in color that this decoration is especially impressive. It has the richness of a thousand crushed pomegranates. Textiles prevail in this exhibition—embracing, by the way, some notable French tapestries—but there are some other important items. One of them is an extraordinary processional canopy, in silver made in the early seventeenth century. It is a masterpiece of the old Spanish metalworker.

A brief catalogue has been issued of the pictures selected from the John G. Johnson collection and placed on exhibition at the Pennsylvania Museum, in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. This is the temporary show upon which Mr. Hamilton Bell was working when we alluded to it some time ago. It is confined to the Italian school. Beginning with the Primitives, it comes down to the sixteenth century. The list embraces such masters as Masaccio, Botticelli, Signorelli, the Vivarini, Palma, Lotto, Tintoretto and Sedoma. A number of school pieces are recorded, but those acquainted with the Johnson collection know that even the school pieces are beautiful works of art. It was a wise move to make this exhibition, so as to give the public a foretaste of what it may enjoy when the collection as a whole is housed and made generally accessible.

The sculpture which Mr. Jo Davidson has executed during the war, portraits of military and other leaders, has been placed on view at the Reinhardt gallery, where it will remain through the rest of the month. More than a score of notabilities are represented in the collection—President Wilson, Marshal Foch, General Pershing, M. Clemenceau, Marshal Joffre, Colonel House, M. Paderewski and others. The busts constitute a kind of plastic history of the personalities of the war.

The last exhibition of the season at the Mich gallery is announced, opening to-morrow and lasting until May 22. It consists of sculpture for the house, the garden and the grounds.

At the Bourgeois gallery there may be seen until May 22 an exhibition of stage models and designs by Mr. Robert Edmond Jones. It ought to prove one of the most interesting affairs of the season. Mr. Jones has shown in more than one production what excellent skill and taste he brings to the solution of theatrical problems, and in an exhibition of this kind the qualities of his art are very ingeniously and effectively isolated.

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Random Impressions In Current Exhibitions

The Print Room at the Public Library is holding its annual exhibition of recent additions. Important accessions are shown to the Avery and Cadwalader collections. The American school is well represented in this show.

Another exhibition is being held at the Touchstone gallery this week. It consists of oil paintings by Kathleen Houlihan, landscapes, portraits and flower pieces.

In the series of shows organized at the Hotel Majestic under the direction of Dr. Fred H. Allen the latest is given to landscapes by Mr. Robert Vonnoh. This lasts until May 17.

The eleventh annual convention of the American Federation of Arts will be held at the Metropolitan Museum on this month. There will be morning and afternoon sessions on May 19, 20 and 21. The addresses and discussions will deal with the establishment of art museums, with various museum problems and with questions of "The People's Picture Galleries," namely, billboards, shop windows and illustrated periodicals. On the evening of May 21 the members will have a dinner at the Hotel McAlpin, and on Saturday they will visit Laurelton Hall, the Louis Tiffany foundation at Oyster Bay.

There are some interesting objects to be seen at the gallery of Consignment Arts in the Gainsborough studio building, where collections are displayed at private sale instead of being sent to auction. The pieces now pre-

sented are from the collection of the late H. Ephraim Benguiat, who specialized in Spanish, Italian and Oriental art. They include some extraordinary textiles. The throne velvet bearing the double eagle of the house of Hapsburg, which dates from the reign of Philip II, is one of the most glorious hangings ever seen in this country. The embroideries of silver and gold are set upon a ruby ground. The effect is somberly magnificent. But of even rarer significance is the great Alhambra throne rug, which is described as unique, and undoubtedly deserves the epithet. The floriated design on this long divan

development of Washington as contemplated in the plan which has for some years been in hand. The problems remaining to be faced are clearly stated, and in the settlement of them the commission is plainly on the side of the angels. Considerable space is given to the subject of these memorials, monuments and statues which the commission has approved. They remind us of the fine standard which has slowly been getting itself established in this country. Here is the great Lincoln memorial, the temple designed by Henry Bacon with its statue by Daniel C. French and its paintings by Jules Guerin. Here are the Meade, Grant and Key memorials, sculptured, respectively, by Charles Gaffey, Henry M. Shrandy and Charles H. Neuhaus. Mrs. Whitney's Titanic memorial is illustrated. So is one of the figures sculptured by Mr. French for the fountain which is to take the place of the old Du Pont statue in Washington, a peculiarly happy instance of the beneficent nature of the commission's influence. There are numerous other matters of consequence recorded. The salient chapter is that which relates to the war.

Being keenly aware of the fact that the medals and insignia in our army and navy might be bettered, the commission offered its services to the government, with the result that both the Secretary

Ridley, U. S. A. officer in charge of public buildings and grounds.

Art in Black and White
A trifle belated, but still before the Spring Academy comes to a close, we renew comment on the black and white productions in that exhibition. They have been charmingly displayed. On the partitions which divide the space at one end of the show prints and drawings have been hung in an uncommonly satisfactory manner. The collection includes a particularly welcome feature in a group of etchings by the late Alden Weir, capital studies which recall his feeling for beauty in whatever medium he adopted. New types are not conspicuous in this part of the exhibition, but it is pleasant to see some comparatively unfamiliar contributors, such as that admirable draftsman, Mr. Frank Mura, and there is much good work from divers well known artists, like Mr. Ernest D. Roth. Among the drawings there are interesting exhibits by Mr. E. H. Blashfield, and from the studio of the late Kehyon Cox. The whole character of the show at this point is well calculated to ratify the decision of the Academy to give black and white its chance.

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ANN RHOLENE.
(From the portrait by Malcolm Parcell in the Pittsburgh exhibition.)

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